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ABSTRACT

St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC), Florida, identified critical issues in e-learning practices and posed six questions in order to formulate an evaluation process. SPJC considered one question per quarter for 18 months. The questions were reviewed using the following steps: (1) examine best e-learning practices related to that question, using the Web as the primary source of information; (2) compile a list of all practices related to the question currently in use at SPJC; (3) compare best external practices with those at SPJC; (4) benchmark SPJC and submit a report to college leadership; and (5) disseminate the results nationally, using the Project Eagle Web site and other forms of distribution. This paper discusses Step 4, incorporating Steps 1-3, with regard to Question 2: Overcoming organizational obstacles to e-learning access. The obstacles include the following: (1) administrative issues, including accreditation, course content, scheduling, and staffing; (2) cost issues; (3) regulatory issues--federal, state, and local; (4) issues of access for people with disabilities; and (5) instructional issues. The report includes results, a review, and recommendations for each category. Some of the recommendations made include increasing the position of CyberAdvisor from half-time to full-time, and synchronization of deadlines, registration, and application procedures with traditional class deadlines. (NB)

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ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
Project Eagle

ED 469 360

Benchmarking St. Petersburg Junior College: A Report to Leadership

Project Eagle Evaluation Question #2
www.spjc.edu/eagle/PEEQ2.htm

How Do SPJC Administrative and Support Systems and Procedures Need to Change In Order to Overcome Organizational Obstacles to E-Learning Access?

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May 31, 2001

Introduction

To formulate an evaluation process of e-learning practices at St. Petersburg Junior College (SPJC) for Project Eagle, external evaluator Dr. Gordon "Spud" Van de Water, Education Commission of the States, suggested that the college first identify critical issues. Dr. James Olliver, Project Eagle director, with the help of the Project Eagle Work Group, formulated six questions, which were then worked into an evaluation plan by Dr. Van de Water and Joyce Burkhart, Coordinator of Research, Evaluation and Dissemination.

The decision was made to consider one question per quarter for the next 18 months, taking the following steps:

1. First, examine best e-learning practices related to that question, both nationwide and worldwide, using the Web as the primary source of information. The results of this external evaluation would be published in an issue Project Eagle's monthly newsletter, Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP).

2. Next, compile a list of all practices related to the question currently in use at SPJC, using a variety of appropriate techniques and strategies.

3. Compare the best external practices with those offered at SPJC.

4. Benchmark SPJC and submit a report to the college leadership on the college's performance in the area under consideration.

5. Finally, disseminate the results nationally, using the Project Eagle Web site and other forms of information distribution.

This report represents Step 4, incorporating the results of Steps 1-3.

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Background

The second question to be evaluated was related to overcoming organizational obstacles to e-learning access. In January 2001, research was completed to compile a list of such obstacles as identified by institutions nationwide and worldwide. In February 2001, the results were published in Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP), Issue 5, *Overcoming Organizational Obstacles to E-Learning Access*. The obstacles included these:

A. Administrative Issues

1. Accreditation
2. Course content
3. Assessment and evaluation
4. Academic calendar/flexible scheduling
5. Governance
6. Student support services
7. Student business issues
8. Technical and technological issues
9. Staffing
10. Institutional resistance to change

B. Cost Issues

C. Regulatory Issues - Federal, State and Local

D. Issues of Access for People with Disabilities

E. Instructional Issues

From February to the end of April 2001, steps were taken to identify the organizational obstacles to effective e-learning access at SPJC. These steps included the following:

1. Examination of existing access-related administrative/support/systems procedures.
2. Written and/or verbal communication with key administrators and staff members about perceived obstacles with subsequent discussion at a Project Eagle Work Group meeting about the results of that communication.
3. An attempt to determine College and University Center policies (individually and collectively) regarding degree access.

In May 2001 external and internal services were compared, and the results compiled in this report. An executive summary appeared in Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP), Issue 9, June 1, 2001.

Results

A. Administrative Issues

1. Accreditation

Nationwide/worldwide. In the early days of e-learning, it was seen by many institutions as a source of easy revenue. By organizing it as a separate administration unit, "the usual department and faculty quality controls could be avoided or minimized." (Turoff). This raised concern among administrators and accrediting bodies about quality assurance in these programs.

In the past few years, however, more and more accrediting agencies, regional and national, have prepared principles and guidelines. Many are listed in Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP) #3, Issue 3, December 1, 2001, *Quality Assurance and Evaluation in E-Learning*. The difficulty at this time seems to be in the universal application of these principles to existing courses.

SPJC. The issue of accreditation has not been an obstacle at the college. Because the development and delivery of eCampus courses must adhere to the same standards as traditional courses, all SPJC programs are fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

To further insure quality, in 1997, two years before the ten-year SACS review that took place, the college formed the EDGE - Exploring Digital and Global Education - committees. These groups were tasked with performing an alternative self-study of the institution in all subject areas that focused on the impact of new technologies in the delivery of education at SPJC.

2. Curriculum and course content

Nationwide/worldwide. Like accreditation, "an important academic issue is the overall integrity of the course," measured not only by the accrediting agencies, but also by "curricular committees...learners and other educational institutions..." (Gellman-Danley and Fetzer)."

In their haste to develop their distance learning programs, some institutions bypassed the traditional process of course development and management, with the resulting products being strongly criticized by students and outside observers in the field of higher education.

SPJC. The college insures the quality of every course delivered in an e-format. It has devised procedures and forms for the creation and review of distance courses. The forms must be submitted to and approved by a Flexible Access Committee named by the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Services. This must be done for every new e-course before it can be offered, even if the same course already exists in a traditional format.

3. Assessment and evaluation

Nationwide/worldwide. One of the most commonly identified areas of weakness in e-learning is that of assessment and evaluation. Articles too numerous to count have appeared within the last two years decrying the lack of serious research in this area.

The question is one of how best to determine the effectiveness of e-courses, whether as individual offerings or within the entire area of distance delivery. While awaiting the returns on the research that has begun on this subject, most observers agree that there must be some way to measure outcomes, starting with the students' own perceptions of e-courses they have taken. These include evaluation of both the learner and the instructor.

SPJC. For the past several years, the college has had a separate student evaluation document for the telecourses it offers. In the fall of 2000, the college's Instructional Technology Advisory Group approved a prototype of a student survey for online instruction. The survey was used for both the fall and spring sessions, with the results carefully analyzed by eCampus administrators for improvement of delivery.

4. Academic calendar/flexible scheduling

Nationwide/worldwide. A relatively recent obstacle has been that of flexible access to e-courses. Traditional college calendars and schedules, as well as certain regulations that must be followed in matters like financial aid and student enrollment periods, make concepts like open entry/open exit offerings difficult, if not impossible, for many institutions to offer.

The relatively small number of traditional colleges and universities that have adopted options for flexible access have solved the problem in unique and individual ways. One school that has put its suggested solutions on the Internet is the University of South Queensland, Australia (McLendon). These include two interesting alternatives:

a. Maintain the institution's set enrollment periods, but allow online students to enroll at any time and provide limited access to their courses immediately. Students officially commence study, gain full access to study materials and complete assessment items only in the next full semester.

b. Online degrees have either continuous enrollments with students permitted to commence study as soon as they enroll or have more frequent set enrollment periods, as many as once a month, with full access to study materials at the start of the next minimally delayed enrollment period.

SPJC. In the summer of 2000, selected representatives from various departments and campuses held a meeting to discuss the issues related to open flexible scheduling. Although there was no immediate follow-up to that meeting, it did yield a list of concerns of those attending. In the fall, the Project Eagle staff combined that list with other issues that were not already included and submitted them to the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Services. In early 2001, activity on the subject began again. Work on the resolution of this obstacle is presently underway.

The list that was submitted from the Project Eagle Work Group in November 2000 included these concerns:

Flexible Scheduling Questions/Issues

+ How often can courses begin -- every Monday? ...every other Monday?

+ What, if any time parameters will be put on the courses? For example, will there be a maximum amount length of time a student must be "enrolled" in any given class? ...a minimum time?

+ Should flexible delivery be limited to certain courses, certain departments, or certain sites?

+ How and when will instructors be paid?

+ When will instructors have opportunities to take vacation?

+ When do you "count" the student for state reporting purposes?

+ How will flexible scheduling impact finance and financial aid issues (e.g., federal grants, loans, scholarships, veterans' benefits, and payment of fees?

+ What changes will need to be made in REGIS to accommodate flexible scheduling? What needs to be done to insure that this component is build into PeopleSoft?

+ How will we determine the maximum enrollment for each course?

5. Governance

Nationwide/worldwide. There are two distinct government-related issues:

a. Intra-institutional. In the early development of e-learning programs, there were multiple answers to where they belonged within an institution. In some organizational models, e-programs fell into the traditional structure of a college. In others, new departments or divisions were formed to handle the program.

Experience from these early days has shown that well-run programs need to develop and assess solid

governance infrastructures before courses are offered: "...advance deliberation and development is extremely important" (Gellman-Danley and Fetzer). Even as late as 2000, in a study by Zane Berge on barriers to e-learning as perceived by managers and administrators, the issue of "lack of strategic planning for distance education" was ranked as #6 of 64.

Up-to-date statistics on the subject appeared in January 2001, when the Primary Research Group issued the results of a survey of 85 colleges. It found that more than 80% of all distance learning courses offered at the institutions surveyed fell under the purview of a main distance learning program, and almost 60% of those programs directed all distance learning efforts at their schools.

b. Inter-institutional. This is an issue of governance when consortia are formed between or among institutions. In some cases, existing structures are reconfigured or new governance structures, like the Western Governors University, are formed to oversee new models of delivery (Gellman-Danley and Fetzer).

SPJC.

a. Intra-institutional. In 1999, the college made the decision to centralize management of all e-courses - telecourses, online courses, and teleweb courses - under the Distance Learning program, known today as the eCampus. The program has a director, whose scope and level of responsibility is the same as that of traditional campus or collegewide program directors in various subject areas. The position reports to the provost of the Seminole campus, where eCampus offices are located.

b. Intra-institutional. In addition to offering community-college level courses through the eCampus, SPJC has formed a College and University Center (CUC), through which the college partners with private and public higher education institutions in Florida to coordinate upper levels and even graduate offerings. To date, three courses are under development, one for the University of Central Florida and two for the University of South Florida. A form has been developed for use in contracting with partner universities for this kind of work.

6. Student support services

Nationwide/worldwide. Most institutions agree that student support services to e-learners must be at least equal to that offered to on-campus students if the e-program is to succeed. These services should include "student advisement, counseling, the library, marketing, materials delivery, textbooks, training and proctoring" (Gellman-Danley and Fetzer).

SPJC. The first Project Evaluation question, "*What Are the Appropriate Models for Development and Redevelopment of Student Support Services?*" dealt with the assessment of the college's student support services to e-students. The results of that report were summarized in Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP), Issue 8, March 1, 2001. In general, the college was found to be doing an exemplary job in its services to non-traditional learners.

However, in a more recent survey for the preparation of this report, the issue of the school's online bookstore was mentioned by several as an obstacle to the successful delivery of e-learning. It was described as inconvenient and difficult for students to use, with procedures that were "awkward" and "complex." Bookstore services in general have been a subject of expressed concern.

7. Student business issues

Nationwide/worldwide. Under this heading fall the issues of procedures for registration, record-keeping, student progress, transfer, and the like. In its Course Administration Principles for Distance Learning, the University of Massachusetts established a principle that "Students should see no administrative difference when electing distance learning courses."

The university identified unresolved obstacles like determining eligibility for financial awards or policies for intercampus records transfer. The question of handling grades and course outcomes from non-conventional instructional delivery methods by conventional institutions is another example of this type of problem (Gellman-

Danley and Fetzer).

SPJC. At the present time, this is an area of some concern. The college has volumes of written policies and procedures for all matters related to student business issues. However, they sometimes are not appropriate and/or followed for e-courses. A survey of administrators in student business areas revealed examples of specific problems:

a. Deadlines. Because of the timing of the notification of eCampus withdrawals, campus records' offices collegewide are frustrated by the additional workload arriving at their busiest time. Since eCampus instructors are not part of a regular "bricks and mortar" site process, their "W's" often arrive at the very end of, rather than throughout, the semester.

b. Registration/College catalog. A few campus administrators have expressed dissatisfaction with the display of online courses in the college schedule book, finding it confusing to non-online students, making it possible for students to sometimes register for the wrong classes.

c. Online applications. Many are submitted incorrectly or are not completed.

d. Integration of eCampus. Because of the structure of eCampus, where support is provided throughout the college at all the campus and center sites, the idiosyncrasies of how each site manages its operations are magnified. Also, eCampus staff is not aware of the procedures and changes that physical campus coordinators are advised of by the college registrar. With only three and one half employees in the eCampus program, it is difficult for them to attend events that would give this information or otherwise keep them abreast of changes.

8. Technical and technological issues

Nationwide/worldwide. The 2000 Berge survey of managers and administrators ranked technical/technological issues as three of the major eleven obstacles:

a. Lack of technical support

b. Difficulty keeping up with technological changes

c. Lack of technology-enhanced classrooms, labs or infrastucture

SPJC. Like other institutions, SPJC faces the same technical and technological challenges. However, the infusion of funds from the Project Eagle grant has alleviated these considerably. To make the college the national model the project envisions, excellent technical and technological support is vital.

With Eagle funds, SPJC has added the equivalent of five full-time instructional technicians, two television control center technicians, one assistant television engineer, one analyst programmer, three technology call center specialists, and two part-time help desk technicians. The project also pays for a percentage of the salaries of the six campus-based instructional technologists.

In addition, Eagle has made possible the equipping of open access lab areas at the campuses, upgrading of faculty development centers, and purchasing of video distribution and control equipment to support interactive classrooms and a collegewide video distribution system.

Because this a potential area of concern after the Eagle grant ends, preliminary discussions have already begun on the sources of funding needed to continue these services.

9. Staffing

Nationwide/worldwide. Externally, there are a number of issues related to staffing and optimal delivery of e-learning:

a. Lack of support staff to help course development (Berge).

b. Need for a well-developed infrastructure that addresses increased staffing needs before courses are offered (Gellman-Danley and Fetzer).

SPJC. The issue of staffing from a faculty perspective will be addressed when Project Eagle Evaluation Question #3 (August 31, 2001), which will deal entirely with instructional issues. Organizationally, there

have been two identified problems by administrators, both related to faculty staffing:

a. A few campus program directors have expressed dissatisfaction with the faculty scheduling process for e-courses. Differences in the way program directors manage their departments lead to different expectations, attitudes and opinions of how the eCampus should be run. Some program directors would prefer a more decentralized approach with e-courses in their subject area under their direction. Meetings to resolve such issues, short of decentralization, have been held at the campuses to address individual differences.

b. Similarly, load management issues are a concerns, with the feeling that a few faculty are teaching too many courses by college standards.

Both fall into the nationally identified category of the need for addressing increased staffing needs before courses are offered and programs developed.

Another staffing concern that was expressed internally was the need for more online advising, counseling and tutoring, as well as a contact person for eCampus students exclusively. This concern was also previously voiced when faculty and staff were polled in February 2001 for their opinions of e-student services in preparation for the Project Eagle Evaluation Question #1 report related to student support services.

10. Institutional resistance to change

Nationwide/worldwide. Externally, this obstacle is sometimes referred to as a "cultural" one within an institution. It encompasses attitudes toward innovation, acceptance of online teaching and learning as legitimate, understanding of what works at a distance, and the values of an organization (King).

In the (Berge) study, four of the eleven strongest barriers to optimal e-learning were related to institutional resistance, including a lack of shared vision for distance education in organization, a slow pace of implementation, and a lack of money budgeted to implement distance education programs.

This is a subtle and pervasive problem area, often unstated, that underlies other surface issues schools find difficult to resolve in developing e-learning programs. It is probably one of the greatest organizational obstacles to e-learning access.

SPJC. Thanks to the support for e-learning by its top administrators, the college has managed to overcome the kinds of institutional resistance to change that have been major obstacles in other place. That SPJC received a multi-million dollar federal grant to build a national e-learning program reflects the positive image the school enjoys as a leader in the field.

Nevertheless, just as eCampus is sometimes accused of failing to follow traditional college policies and procedures, those involved in the planning and delivery of e-learning have expressed frustration with the lack of administrative methods that are practical and appropriate for the new forms of education. They would readily agree with the external obstacles that King and Berge have identified, and would welcome a revision of existing policies and procedures to deal with the needs of a new learning population.

B. Cost issues

Nationwide/worldwide. For many institutions considering to what extent an e-learning program should be developed and expanded, the cost of creating and maintaining e-courses is a major issue. While there has been much debate about the relative cost/return ratio e-courses, there have been few definitive answers.

However, in the past few years, several serious studies have been undertaken to determine an effective methodology for calculating costs. Various models have been developed, but none more researched and tested than that recently completed by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's Technology Costing Methodology Project.

Its 2001 Handbook presents a methodology that helps an institution "define delivery modes, identify the full range of costs for those delivery modes and develop analytical data for cost comparisons." It also proposes "a set of procedures by which data from multiple institutions can be placed in a reasonably common framework and exchanged or compiled."

The accompanying Casebook looks at the results of 12 pilot sites, and the Tabulator is a set of electronic spreadsheets to assist the user in performing the actual cost calculations. It is expected that the results of the TCM project will provide a definitive solution to the issues of costing.

SPJC. These kinds of ost issues have not been identified as major obstacles at the college. Three years ago, the school entered into an arrangement with WebCT to use and assist in the development of their products. Online courses are created in WebCT exclusively, with instructional technology personnel and faculty well-trained in its use. This consistency in new course development, plus the successful growth of the eCampus, has not made cost a major issue.

With the exception of additional instructional technology and technical staff, funded at least in part by Project Eagle, other administrative matters related to e-courses have been handled by existing staff. Because SPJC has long encouraged the use of computers throughout the college for business and instruction, the college has been less likely to feel overwhelmed by the hardware costs that pose major obstacles for other schools entering the e-learning market.

Project Eagle funds are also supporting the development of more than 160 new online courses over a four-year period. By the time that money is no longer available, the efforts of projects like TCM should have solved the dilemma of accurate cost analysis.

C. Regulatory Issues - Federal, State and Local

Nationwide/worldwide. In its recently released report *The Power of the Internet for Learning*, the federal Web-Based Education Commission (WBEC) stated that "The legacy of the one-room schoolhouse is holding back the potential of the one-world classroom." It further states that regulations governing much of education today are focused on supporting the welfare of the educational institution, not the individual learner, and are written for an earlier model of education that is time-fixed, place-based and no longer realistic.

The report calls for "wholesale rethinking of the regulatory foundations governing our educational institutions," an obstacle and challenge because each state establishes its own regulatory structure. It identifies three major barriers at the federal level that affect all Title IV-eligible higher education institutions with e-learning programs:

a. The "12-hour rule." In 1994 the U.S. Department of Education defined a week of instructional time to mean 12 hours of regularly scheduled instruction, examinations, or preparation for examination for courses not offered in standard terms.

b. The "50% rule." Institutions must offer 50% of their instruction in a classroom-based environment, to assure that a student is physically participating in an academic course of study for which he or she is receiving federal student financial assistance.

c. Ban on incentive compensation plans. Schools may not pay third party entities for helping them secure enrollment, including Web portals that might otherwise provide information to prospective students.

The federal government has already begun work on those issues identified above, but the greater difficulty of resolution will be at the lower levels of government.

At state and local levels, there are a myriad of statutes and regulations, some of which are mutually exclusive. This sometimes makes it almost impossible to create Web-based programs that can meet all states' requirements. The diversity of the regulations includes establishment of new online programs, transfer of credit, acceptance of credentials obtained outside a state, and limitations of a school's geographic service area.

Within its own 15 member states, the Southern Regional Education Board discovered "an array of different formats" when in late 1996 it conducted a survey of state regulations as they apply to distance learning. However, it felt none was a barrier significant enough "to thwart a concerted and cooperative effort to develop an Electronic Common market in the region" and has since worked vigorously to create its own regional electronic campus.

SPJC. Like every other Title IV-eligible institution, the college's eCampus is faced with the restrictions of the federal government's regulations. At the state and local level, there were two areas of concern identified as obstacles:

a. Testing. Students must attend a testing center in Florida to take the College Level Assessment Skills Test (CLAST).

b. Geographic restrictions. Florida's community colleges are each designated to serve a specific geographic area, in SPJC's case, Pinellas County. Through discussions with the Florida Community Colleges Presidents' Council and Distance Learning Consortium, e-courses have been viewed as being within the service area, since the students have to "drive" to the server in the college's home county, just as they might drive across a "service area" line to attend a class in another area.

The general agreement is that it is appropriate to offer online classes, but inappropriate to advertise for those classes in another college's service area. The issue is always a sensitive one, however, and efforts are underway in the consortium to share courseware and services, so that no institution feels it is adversely impacting another.

D. Issues of Access for People with Disabilities

Nationwide/worldwide. The issue of access to e-courses is in reality one of access specifically to online courses. It is generally agreed that the advent of Web-based education has given people with disabilities unprecedented access to pursuing higher education, but only if materials are produced in a way that makes them fully accessible. While the issue of access is easier to overcome for the hearing or mobility impaired, it has proved a challenge for those with significant visual disabilities.

The federal government has already mandated the inclusion of alt-text tags on Web pages that contain graphical content, but there is still a lack of information about the kind of overall page design that is best accessed by assistive technology devices like screen readers. Presently, there are basic design guidelines on the Web, provided by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium. An additional support for developers is Bobby, a free service that helps them identify and repair significant barriers to access by individuals with disabilities.

SPJC. The challenges of providing full access to persons with disabilities have been identified at the college, which has been and continues to be addressing them. For the hearing impaired, there is captioning equipment, with the hiring of a captionist in process. For the visually impaired, instructional technologists are aware of the problems of both the regulations and the resources available for optimal Web site production.

There is one unresolved issue of access to those with mobility limitations. Students must come to a campus or proctored site to take telecourse and some online tests. Often these are students who are taking eCampus classes precisely because they cannot physically come to a campus.

E. Instructional Issues.

The subject of faculty concerns, including those related to perceived organizational obstacles, will be addressed thoroughly and exclusively in Project Eagle Evaluation Question #3. The external evaluation has already been completed and published in Best Educational E-Practices (BEEP), Issue 8, May 2001, *Faculty Issues in An E-Learning Environment.*

Review and Recommendations

SPJC has dealt effectively with most of the major obstacles faced by other institutions. From the beginning of its e-learning efforts, the college has generally planned ahead, carefully following existing regulations, performing self-evaluations and needs assessments, and responding to input from its staff to avoid potential problem areas.

The school has long been proactive toward the development of non-traditional courses and programs; it completely online Veterinary Technology degree was one of the first of its kind in the country. Priority has been given to technological innovation and improvements, and both faculty and staff encouraged and given the opportunity to improve professional technical skills.

Some of the obstacles it faces, like the current federal, state and local regulatory restrictions, are not within its power to change. Administrative support for any proposals to improve rules governing e-learning access seem the most practical means at the college's disposal to help effect the needed statutory changes.

The organizational obstacles that are perceived to exist at SPJC are specific and capable of being remedied within the institution:

1. **Flexible scheduling** (Section A4). ECampus is interested in offering courses in an open entry/open exit environment. To accomplish this would certainly improve the access to e-learning that Project Eagle is tasked to accomplish. In order to do this, a number of policy and procedure questions must be answered.

Although previous attempts to resolve difficult issues have not been successful, the matter is under active study again. Many of the technical barriers are expected to be resolved when the college migrates to a new student system (PeopleSoft) within a few years, and the others will need to be dealt with one by one.

2. **Online bookstore services** (Section A6). Just one of a number of issues that face the Follett bookstores at SPJC, this one was singled out in the informal survey of administrators and staff that preceded this report. Although college and university bookstores nationally are challenged with adapting to the changes brought about largely by courses with an online component, Follett's has had a particularly difficult time. The complaint of procedures that are "awkward" and "complex," hence discouraging to those trying to make their purchases online, poses an extra barrier to the potential e-student.

3. **Policies and procedures for handling student business issues** (Section A7). The perception is that the eCampus' implementation of the college's written policies and procedures regarding deadlines, registration, and online applications is not always synchronized with those dealing with business issues related to non-traditional courses. The resolution of these issues and others of a similar nature that might arise will not only smooth the flow of e-learning, but will improve the general image and integration of eCampus within the college.

4. **Technological challenges** (Section A8). Although priority has long been given to keeping abreast of technological changes and Project Eagle has supplied needed funds to assist the college in doing so, thought needs (and has already begun) to be given to sources of funding to continue this after the grant ends in 2003.

5. **Faculty scheduling for e-courses** (Section A9).College administrators have noted perceived lack of cooperation among some departments and directors in the scheduling of faculty for e-courses. Accommodations are being worked out, short of a return to total e-program decentralization. The meetings that have been held on the campuses to address the differences in how individual program directors want to be informed and involved in the scheduling process will help alleviate this issue.

6. **Online student assistance** (Section A9). This concern was mentioned by online faculty in the report on Project Eagle Evaluation Question #1 regarding student services in February 2001. It surfaced again when administrators were queried for this report. There is a perceived need for advising, counseling and tutoring, as well as a full-time contact person assigned to eCampus students. Although the college has taken steps to increase the tutoring options with Smarthinking, an outside online source, and the creation of an internal bulletin board for students, the half-time position of CyberAdvisor is apparently not sufficient to fill the personnel needs for this growing mode of educational delivery. A request to increase this position to full-time was included in the 2002 eCampus unit plan.

7. **Out-of-date administrative methods** (Section A10). This concern is closely related to the third one listed here on policies and procedures for handling student business issues. Those who work with the eCampus program must sometimes deal with traditional methods for handling matters like deadlines, withdrawals, etc. that are not practical for optimal delivery of e-learning. There is a need for a review and possible revision of the issues that are causing the most friction.

8. **Regulatory issues** (Section C). Although there are many statutory restrictions that apply to all Florida institutions offering non-traditional course, the requirements that (a) students must physically attend a testing center in Florida to take the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) and (b) the college must be conscious of

its geographic service area within the state, are two that were specifically mentioned as obstacles to optimal access.

9. **Access for those with mobility disabilities** (Section D). The improvement of e-learning access for individuals is an ongoing process, but the need for students to come to a campus or a proctored site to take telecourse and some online tests was singled out as an unresolved one. As other instruments like the placement test and mandatory new student orientation become available online, this barrier should be the next one to fall.

Overall, when measured against the efforts of other institutions, SPJC is once again far ahead. The examination of organizational obstacles has demonstrated that the college has tried to plan ahead and is responsive to needs for change as they arise. The issues listed here should offer a concise starting point for the school to address and eliminate present barriers to a seamless delivery of services in a new educational environment.

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